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THE JESUS PRAYER IN ST DIADOCCHUS OF PHOTICE

By

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One of the most striking facts about the history of the Orthodox Church during the present century is the way in which, geographically and culturally, it is becoming more and more a 'Western' as well as an 'Eastern' Church. The millions of Orthodox Christians who, driven by economic pressure or by persecution, have settled in America and Australia, in Britain, France and Germany, are rapidly ceasing to be a 'diaspora', aliens and temporary residents in a foreign land, and they are becoming in the true and full sense citizens of the Western world. This emigration, unprecedented in the past experience of Orthodoxy, places upon us in a new and urgent manner a double responsibility – a responsibility both to testify and to listen: to testify before the West to the full integrity of the Orthodox tradition; to listen to the West and to learn from it in openness and humility.

To this task of testifying before the West the fourth occupant of the Orthodox see of Thyateira and Great Britain, Archbishop Methodios, has made a notable contribution. Following the example of the Church Fathers, of great hierarchs such as St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian, he has striven tirelessly to combine pastoral service with study and writing, the vocation of the diocesan bishop with that of the scholar. I count it a privilege to serve as one of his assistant bishops, and to contribute to the present volume in his honour.

As we Orthodox bear our testimony and at the same time listen, what is it within our Orthodox tradition that proves most deeply attractive to present-day Western Christians? Any answer to that question would need to mention, among other elements, the Orthodox understanding of contemplative silence, of 'stillness' or *hesychia*; and, within Orthodox Hesychasm, we would need to refer in particular to the Jesus Prayer. It is astonishing how immediate and widespread has been the appeal of the Jesus Prayer throughout the Christian West, whether Catholic, Anglican or Protestant. To many who have otherwise no contact with Orthodoxy, it has proved a path of entry to the inner kingdom. It is surely significant that a book such as *The Way of a Pilgrim*,

which had relatively little impact when first published in nineteenth-century Russia, should have become when translated a bestseller in the twentieth-century West.

Within the history of the Jesus Prayer a place of exceptional importance belongs to the fifth-century Greek bishop St Diadochus of Photice. He is not in fact the earliest Greek writer to mention the Jesus Prayer. About a generation before him, St Nilus of Ancyra (died c. 430) speaks in his voluminous correspondence of the 'remembrance' or 'invocation' of the 'Holy Name of Jesus'. But he makes no more than scattered and incidental allusions – four passing references in the course of more than a thousand letters – and so the Jesus Prayer can scarcely be regarded as a dominant *motif* in his spirituality. With Diadochus the case is altogether different. The 'remembrance' or 'invocation' of Jesus is discussed in seven out of his *Hundred Gnostic Chapters*², and it is closely linked with other fundamental themes in his ascetic theology. He is the earliest Father to assign a central and decisive role to the Jesus Prayer.

Diadochus and his Predecessors

Of Diadochus himself little is known³. He was probably born in the early years of the fifth century.

1. See *Letters* II, 140 (PG 79, 260A, 261D); II, 214 (312C); III, 273 (520C); III, 278 (521BC). The correspondence attributed to Nilus in PG 79 cannot, in its present form, be entirely his work. On the critical problems involved, see K. Heussi, *Untersuchungen zu Nilus dem Asketen (Texte und Untersuchungen* xlii, 2: Leipzig 1917), especially chapter 2; A. Cameron, 'The Authenticity of the Letters of St Nilus of Ancyra', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* xvii, 2 (1976), pp. 181–96. But no particular suspicion attaches to the passages cited in the present article.

2. *Chapters* 31, 32, 33, 59, 61, 85, 97.

3. The best critical edition of Diadochus' writings is by E. des Places, *Diadoque de Photice: Oeuvres spirituelles (Sources chrétiennes* 5: 3rd ed., Paris 1966). This includes an excellent introduction, the Greek text, French translation, and notes. It supersedes earlier editions in the *Philokalia* (Venice 1782) and in Migne, PG 65 (Paris 1864); also those by Mai (Rome 1840), Popov (Kiev 1903), Beneshevich (St Petersburg 1908),

together with the soul, towards the love of God³⁴. When recommending fasting, he is careful to repudiate any depreciation of the material creation³⁵; fasting and other forms of bodily discipline are to be practised with restraint, in a 'moderate' and 'balanced' way (συμμέτρως)³⁶.

Such, then, is the general position of Diadochus within the early spiritual tradition of the Christian East. In his *Gnostic Chapters* two contrasting streams of spirituality are fused: on the one side, the systematic, Platonizing, 'intellectualist' stream exemplified by Evagrius; on the other, the more Biblical, 'affective', experiential stream found in Macarius/Symeon (but the contrast between them should not be exaggerated). Many of the technical terms are Evagriean, but the living content that Diadochus instils into them owes more to the spirit of the *Homilies*. In the convergence that he effects between the two approaches, Diadochus anticipates St Maximus the Confessor (c. 580–662) and the fourteenth-century Hesychasts such as St Gregory Palamas (1296–1359).

'Invocation' or 'Remembrance'?

What, then, is the distinctive place of the Jesus Prayer within the Diadochan synthesis?³⁷

A basic question confronts us at the outset. How far is it legitimate to speak of the Jesus Prayer when discussing Diadochus? Does Diadochus actually have in view a particular formula of invocation addressed to Jesus, or is he merely advocating the remembrance of the person of Jesus, meditation upon him in a more diffused sense? Hausherr argues in favour of the second alternative. 'Diadochus', he writes, 'nowhere gives, even in an approximate fashion, the classic formula of the Jesus Prayer. He did not even know it.'³⁸ What Diadochus is recommending, ac-

ording to Hausherr, is remembrance (μνήμη) rather than invocation (ἐπικλήσις), meditation (μελέτη) rather than a specific form of words. Even if the *Chapters* do not altogether exclude the idea of 'calling upon' the Lord Jesus, such invocation is secondary; Diadochus' real concern is with the cultivation of the memory³⁹.

Now it is certainly true that the reintegration of the memory is central to Diadochus' ascetic theology. Throughout the *Chapters* he speaks repeatedly of the 'remembrance of God' (μνήμη τοῦ Θεοῦ); somewhat less frequently, yet none the less on a significant number of occasions, he mentions the 'remembrance of the Lord Jesus' (ἡ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μνήμη), describing this as a form of 'meditation' (μελέτη)⁴⁰. Thus far Hausherr is entirely correct. But there are several passages where Diadochus surely envisages more than simple remembrance or recollection. With his usual thoroughness Hausherr cites most of the relevant evidence, but he fails to allow it due weight:

First, Diadochus does not merely speak about meditation on the *person* of Jesus, but he refers specifically to the *name* of Jesus⁴¹.

Secondly, on one occasion he speaks, not just of remembering Jesus, but of 'invoking' or 'calling upon' him, using the word ἐπικαλεῖν: 'If, then, a man begins to make progress in keeping the commandments and unceasingly *calls upon* the Lord Jesus (ἐπικαλοῖτο τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν)...'⁴². This allusion to *epiclesis*, although unique in Diadochus, is nevertheless significant.

Thirdly and most important of all, Diadochus twice uses the phrase τὸ Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, 'the *O Lord Jesus*'⁴³. Hausherr comments, 'This would seem perhaps to indicate a prayer; but not necessarily so'⁴⁴. It is difficult, however, to see why Diadochus should employ this unusual phrase – the neuter article followed by the vocative – unless in fact he has in mind a prayer, a particular formula of invocation commencing *Lord Jesus*.

If we look more closely at the way in which Diadochus employs the phrase 'the *O Lord Jesus*', this strengthens our impression that he is referring to a particular prayer, to an invocation rather than mere remembrance. In the first of the two passages where the phrase occurs, he is discussing the right way to combat listlessness or 'accidie' (ἀκηδία): this must

34. *Chapters* 33, 79.

35. *Chapters* 43–44.

36. *Chapters* 43, 46, 48, 82.

37. On the invocation of the name of Jesus in Orthodox spirituality, the basic historical study – open to correction, however, on points of detail – remains I. Hausherr, *Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 157: Rome 1960); English translation by C. Cummings, *The Name of Jesus* (*Cistercian Studies Series* 44: Kalamazoo 1978); on Diadochus, see pp. 201–10 (French original); pp. 220–9 (English translation). For a more popular treatment of the Jesus Prayer, see 'Un moine de l'Eglise d'Orient' (Lev Gillet), *La prière de Jésus* (revised ed., Chevetogne 1974); English translation, 'A Monk of the Eastern Church', *The Prayer of Jesus*, translated by 'A Monk of the Western Church' (New York/Tournai 1967). There is a brief but careful survey by P. Adnès in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 8 (1974), cols. 1126–50. See also T. Spidlik, *La spiritualité de l'Orient chrétien: Manuel systématique* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 206: Rome 1978), pp. 305–10. For further bibliography, consult Hausherr, *Noms du Christ*, pp. 9–18; Spidlik, *op. cit.*, p. 385; K. Ware, in *Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 2:2 (1980), pp. 92–93.

38. *Noms du Christ*, p. 208.

39. *op. cit.*, p. 206.

40. *Chapters* 61, 97.

41. Twice in *Chapters* 31, once in 33, twice in 59. But in 32, 61, 88 and 97, he refers only to the remembrance of Jesus, without mentioning the name of Jesus. It is surprising that the very thorough 'Index ascétique et mystique' provided in the edition of des Places (pp. 188–204) does not include *δογμα* or *ἐπικαλεῖν*.

42. *Chapters* 85.

43. *Chapters* 59, 61.

44. *Noms du Christ*, p. 210 (italics in the original).

be done by restricting the mind (διάνοια) to the remembrance of God.⁴⁵ He continues:

When we have blocked all its outlets by means of the remembrance of God, the intellect (νοῦς) requires of us imperatively some task that will satisfy its need for activity. For the complete fulfilment of its purpose we should give it nothing but the *O Lord Jesus*. 'No one', it is written, 'can say "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3). Let the intellect continually concentrate on this phrase within its inner shrine with such intensity that it is not turned aside to any mental images⁴⁶.

Here Diadochus starts by speaking of the 'remembrance of God' (μνήμη τοῦ Θεοῦ). But the text from 1 Corinthians refers not just to remembering Christ but to saying 'Lord Jesus'.⁴⁷ Moreover, in the sentence immediately preceding, Diadochus has deliberately replaced Paul's use of the nominative Κύριος Ἰησοῦς by the vocative form Κύριε Ἰησοῦ: this surely suggests that he has in view an actual invocation to Christ commencing with those words. He goes on to describe 'the *O Lord Jesus*' as a 'phrase', or 'word', ῥητόν or ῥῆμα (there is manuscript support for both readings). All this makes it plain that he is concerned, not just with a presence recalled, but with words pronounced.

The second passage confirms this:

At that time the soul possesses grace, which itself meditates together with the soul and cries out with it the *O Lord Jesus*, just as a mother teaches her child the name 'father', repeating it with him until she forms in him the habit of calling distinctly for his father even when asleep, instead of prattling in his usual way⁴⁸.

As before, this definitely implies words pronounced and not simply a memory recalled. It is true that Diadochus begins by using the word 'meditates' (συμμελετώσαν); yet even this might also bear the sense 'recite'. What follows is, however, unambiguous. Grace 'cries out' (συγκράζουσιν) with the soul to the Lord: 'the *O Lord Jesus*' is a κραυγή, a 'cry' or 'shout', an invocation. The analogy of the mother and child reinforces this: the child is taught not merely to remember or recognize his father but to repeat his name, to call for him instinctively even when asleep.

In these two passages, then, it seems highly probable that Diadochus envisages a specific prayer,

frequently repeated, and commencing with the words *Lord Jesus* (Κύριε Ἰησοῦ). Whether these two words were followed by any others, and if so what the other words were, Diadochus does not specify. In later sources the initial invocation 'Lord Jesus' is usually followed by an appeal for mercy. In the early sixth century St Varsanuphius and St John of Gaza⁴⁹, and also their disciple St Dorotheus⁵⁰, use the form 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'. About the same time, or perhaps somewhat later, the *Life of Abba Philemon*, an Egyptian monk, employs what was to become in due course the standard form of the Jesus Prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me'⁵¹. Possibly Diadochus was familiar with a similar form of words, but this we have no way of discovering; elsewhere in the *Chapters* there is no particular emphasis upon the need for mercy or on the formula *Kyrie eleison*. But at any rate it is clear that he did not envisage the invocation of the name 'Jesus' entirely on its own; it was accompanied at least by the word 'Lord'. The text of Diadochus, therefore, provides no support for the thesis of Archimandrite Lev Gillet, who considers that the Jesus Prayer began with the one word 'Jesus', and that this was only later expanded into what we have termed the 'standard form'⁵².

Such is the sum total of what Diadochus has to tell us about the exterior practice of the invocation of the Holy Name. He does not say how quickly or slowly it is to be said, although, as we shall see shortly, he teaches that it should be so far as possible continuous. He says nothing about the bodily posture—whether standing or sitting, whether with the eyes open or closed. Nowhere does he suggest that the repeated invocation should be co-ordinated with the rhythm of the breathing. One point, however, emerges with clarity. Hausherr has surely taken an unduly minimizing view of the evidence⁵³. It is reasonable

49. *Erotapocriseis* (ed. S. Schoinas: Volos 1960), 126, 446; French translation by L. Regnault and P. Lemaire (Solesmes 1972), 175, 446. Cf. F. Neyt, 'The Prayer of Jesus', *Sobornost* 6:9 (1974), pp. 641–54.

50. *Life of St Dositheus* 10 (ed. L. Regnault and J. de Préville, *Sources chrétiennes* 92 [Paris 1963], p. 138).

51. Φιλοκαλία τῶν ἱερῶν Νηπιτικῶν, vol. ii (3rd ed., Athens 1958), p. 244, line 39; cf. lines 19–20 for the shorter formula, without 'Son of God', as found in Varsanuphius and Dorotheus. Cf. the English translation of the *Life of Abba Philemon* in Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. ii (London 1981), p. 348. The work is hard to date: it could belong to the sixth or early seventh century, but may possibly be several hundred years later. See B. Krivocheine, 'Date du texte traditionnel de la "Prière de Jésus"', *Messenger de l'Exarchat du Patriarche Russe en Europe Occidentale* 7–8 (1951), pp. 55–59. It is certainly prior to the twelfth century, since it is quoted by Peter of Damascus: cf. J. Gouillard, 'Un auteur spirituel du douzième siècle, Pierre Damascène', *Echos d'Orient* 38 (1939), pp. 268–9.

52. See *La prière de Jésus*, p. 52 et passim; against this view, Hausherr, *Noms du Christ*, p. 118.

53. As he does also in regard to Nilus of Ancyra: cf. *Noms du Christ*, pp. 195–6, where he asserts somewhat arbitrarily that the term 'invocation', used several times by Nilus, is to be

45. *Chapters* 58.

46. *Chapters* 59.

47. Diadochus' use of 1 Cor. 12:3 at this point underlines the Pneumatological dimension of the Jesus Prayer: invocation of the Lord Jesus involves the third person of the Trinity as well as the second.

48. *Chapters* 61.

to conclude that Diadochus has in mind, not only remembrance or meditation, but an actual phrase, an invocation of the name of the Lord Jesus; and so he may justly be regarded as a witness to the employment of the *Jesus Prayer*.

The Jesus Prayer and Inner Silence

What function, then, is played by this remembrance or invocation of the Lord Jesus within Diadochus' theology as a whole? Let us consider first the way in which Diadochus connects the repetition of the phrase *Lord Jesus* with Evagrius' notion of image-free prayer; and then let us see how the *Jesus Prayer* is related to Diadochus' anthropology.

Diadochus joins together two ways of praying, both of them to be found in fourth-century Egyptian monasticism, but at that stage juxtaposed rather than linked with each other. The first is the practice, found especially in the *Apophthegmata*, of employing brief phrases, frequently repeated, as a method of maintaining continual 'remembrance of God'.⁵⁴ This practice is often styled 'monologic prayer', prayer of a single *logos* or phrase (not necessarily a single word); the first known use of the word *monologistos* in this way, as a technical term for prayer, is in fact considerably later than the fourth century⁵⁵. Among the Desert Fathers of Egypt a wide variety of short formulae is employed; while the name of Jesus occurs in some of them, it enjoys no special prominence.

The second element that Diadochus incorporates is the practice of 'pure' or imageless prayer, recommended by Evagrius of Pontus. According to Evagrius, 'Prayer is the laying aside of thoughts';⁵⁶ the aim in praying is to attain a state of inner silence, an intuitive and unmediated awareness of God, on a level above discursive thinking. But how in practice are we to achieve this non-iconic prayer? Evagrius suggests no method or technique. He does, it is true, recommend in general terms the use of 'brief but intense prayer' at times of temptation⁵⁷, and he proposes in the *Antirrheticus* the repetition of particular verses from the Psalms as a weapon against the different demons. But nowhere does he advocate the

adoption of 'monologic prayer', as found among his contemporaries in Egypt, as a way of entry into the realm of inner silence.

The connection that Evagrius omits to make constitutes precisely a key point in the teaching of Diadochus, one of his major innovations. Taking over from Evagrius the notion of prayer as a 'laying aside' of thoughts⁵⁸, at the same time he proposes, in a way that Evagrius fails to do, a method for achieving such a state; and this method is the practice of 'monologic prayer'. He is also more definite than the Desert Fathers of Egypt about the form which the 'monologic prayer' should take. Whereas they used a diversity of short phrases, Diadochus insists on one unvarying form of invocation: the words *Lord Jesus*. In thus establishing a connection between 'monologic prayer' and image-free prayer, and in assigning a central place to the name of Jesus, Diadochus makes a decisive contribution to the evolution of the *Jesus Prayer*.

The manner in which the invocation of the Lord Jesus brings the aspirant to image-free prayer is indicated in the passage already quoted, *Gnostic Chapters* 59⁵⁹. The *nous* or intellect, as Diadochus sees it, has an inherent 'need for activity' (ἐντρέχεια), which must in some way be satisfied. It is not possible, simply through an exertion of will-power, to hold our mind in a state of suspended animation: on the psychological as on the physical level, nature abhors a vacuum. As Nilus insists, the *nous* is by nature 'ever-moving';⁶⁰ in the words of Mark the Monk, a writer close in spirit to Diadochus, 'The rational intellect cannot rest idle'⁶¹. To meet this need for activity, so Diadochus teaches, the *nous* should be made to recite the prayer *Lord Jesus*: 'We should give it nothing but the *O Lord Jesus*'. The words 'nothing but...' are significant: in place of the multiplicity of formulae prevailing in fourth-century Egypt, Diadochus proposes a single, unvarying invocation. As Hausherr puts it, we are moving 'de la liberté à l'unicité', from freedom to uniformity⁶². It is exactly the unvarying character of the invocation that leads the aspirant to non-iconic prayer: by virtue of the very monotony of the formula of prayer, by virtue of the intellect's concentration exclusively upon one and the same phrase 'within its inner shrine', it succeeds in not 'being turned aside to any mental images'. As Diadochus puts it elsewhere, the invocation or remembrance of Jesus is in this manner a way of 'keeping guard' over the intellect, of preserving τήρησις τοῦ νοῦ⁶³.

understood 'not in the phonetic but in the theological sense'. Surprisingly Gillet, *op. cit.*, makes no reference at all to Nilus.

54. See L. Regnault, 'La prière continue "monologistos" dans la littérature apophthegmatique', *Irénikon* 47 (1974), pp. 467-93; also K. Ware, "'Pray Without Ceasing": the Ideal of Continual Prayer in Eastern Monasticism', *Eastern Churches Review* 2 (1969), pp. 253-61.

55. The phrase 'monologic prayer' is first found in St John Climacus (7th century), *Ladder* 15 (PG 88, 889D), where it refers to the *Jesus Prayer*: μονολόγιστος Ἰησοῦ εὐχή. The adjective μονολόγιστος occurs at an earlier date in Mark the Monk, but he uses it as an epithet for hope or for demonic temptation, not for prayer: cf. *On the Spiritual Law* 10 (PG 65, 905C); *On those who think to be justified by works* 140 (952C); *On Baptism* (1001A, 1016A-D, 1020B, 1021B).

56. *On Prayer* 70 (1181C).

57. *On Prayer* 98 (1189A).

58. See above, note 14.

59. See above, note 46.

60. *On the Superiority of Monks* 23 (PG 79, 1088B).

61. *On Penitence* 11 (PG 65, 981B). For λογικός in the Migne text, read λογικός in accordance with the best manuscripts.

62. *Noms du Christ*, p. 197.

63. *Chapters* 97.

The Reintegration of the Memory

Imageless prayer is closely linked, in Diadochus' teaching, with the reintegration of the memory and so with his anthropology as a whole.

The remembrance of the Holy Name, as Hausherr rightly observes, is never treated by Diadochus as an end in itself, but only as a means. The supreme aim of the spiritual life is love: to love God, and other humans in him. This Diadochus makes clear in the very first sentence of the *Gnostic Chapters*: 'All spiritual contemplation, my brethren, should have as its guide faith, hope and love, but most of all love'⁶⁴. And in his closing chapter he finishes upon the same note, describing how at the hour of death the God-centred soul is 'lifted with the angels of peace above the hosts of darkness' and 'given wings by spiritual love'⁶⁵. Love is a recurrent *leitmotiv* throughout the work⁶⁶. Love is the end, the Jesus Prayer a means—a 'way in' to divine love.

But the Jesus Prayer has also a more immediate purpose. It restores the human person, and more specifically the human memory (*μνήμη*), to its primal unity as intended by God. By *mneme* Diadochus and other ancient writers mean more than is denoted by the modern conception of the memory; often the word 'consciousness' might be more accurate as a translation.

In his doctrine of the human person, Diadochus first of all makes a distinction, in much the same way as do Irenaeus and Origen, between that which is 'according to the image' (*τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα*) and that which is 'according to the likeness' (*τὸ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*):

All of us humans are made according to God's image; but to be according to his likeness is granted only to those who through great love have brought their own freedom into subjection to God. For only when we do not belong to ourselves do we become like him who through love has reconciled us to himself⁶⁷.

The 'image', then, denotes our essential humanity, that which makes us to be persons; it is the initial endowment bestowed upon all of us alike, and it is never altogether forfeited through sin. The 'likeness', on the other hand, signifies our final aim in the spiritual life, and when fully realized it is identical with *theosis*, with being 'deified through the riches of God's grace'⁶⁸. The vocation of each human person is therefore to be a pilgrim journeying from the 'image' to

the 'likeness'. The first Adam failed in this vocation, but through the incarnation, death and glorification of Christ, the second Adam, the way forward lies once again open before us.

Formed in God's image, called to attain the divine likeness, the human person in Diadochus' view was created as a single, undivided unity. This unity differs, however, from the original simplicity ascribed by Origen to the *logikoi*, since for Diadochus it involves the body as well as the *nous* or the soul. In its state of unified singleness prior to the fall, the soul according to Diadochus possessed a natural 'perceptive faculty' or 'awareness' (*αἴσθησις*) which was one and 'simple' (*ἀπλή*). As a result of Adam's disobedience this perceptive faculty has been split into two conflicting 'modes of operation' (*ἐνέργειαι*). On the one side, we are 'dragged down towards carnal pleasures': 'The senses of the body impel us almost violently towards what attracts them'. On the other side, the soul and intellect continue to be drawn towards 'invisible blessings' and the 'good things of heaven'.

This body-soul conflict is directly the consequence of the fall. In the beginning it was not so, for the human person was created as a psychosomatic unity. In the end it will not be so, for it is the aim of our spiritual life precisely to overcome this duality and to restore the primal integration. Instead of the state of conflict that is our present predicament, the *nous* will share its joy with the body, so that body and soul will together participate in a single joy, as they did in the *status ante peccatum*:

According to the measure of its progress, the intellect communicates its own joy to the body also, as it rejoices endlessly in the song of love and praise: 'My soul trusted in him and I am helped; my flesh flowers again, and with all my will-power I shall sing his praise' (Ps. 27 [28]:7). The joy which then fills both soul and body is a true recollection of the life without corruption⁶⁹.

This insistence upon the Spirit-bearing potentialities of the human body, upon the basic, God-given unity of the human person, is one of the most attractive features in Diadochus. The soul's 'earthly appetite', he insists, is not to be suppressed but redirected: it is to be 'united with the spiritual disposition' of the soul⁷⁰. Diadochus' ideal is not the mortification of our physicality but its transfiguration. This is one of the points where, as already noted, he diverges clearly from the Origenist Evagrius, with his Platonizing conception of the human person as essentially a 'naked intellect'. Diadochus' preference for the

64. Chapters 1.

65. Chapters 100.

66. See especially 12-23, 89-91. While speaking most commonly of *agape*, Diadochus also uses the word *eros*: Chapters 10, 14, 19, 56, 74; *Vision* 2.

67. Chapters 4.

68. *Sermon* 6. Deification changes, not our nature (*φύσις*), but our habitual state (*ἔξις*): cf. below, note 73.

69. Chapters 24-25.

70. Chapters 29.

Biblical, holistic approach of the Macarian *Homilies* is very plain⁷¹.

But in what way are we to return from our present state of fallen fragmentation to our original state of integration? The duality effected by the fall exists on the level both of the *will* (θέλημα) and of the *memory* (μνήμη). On the level of the will we are attracted simultaneously towards both good and evil. Similarly, on the level of the memory both good and evil thoughts arise spontaneously in our consciousness, even against our own volition. We cannot think of good without also thinking of evil:

When a man stands out of doors in winter at the break of day, facing the east, the front of his body is warmed by the sun, while his back is still cold because the sun is not on it.... Such a man both shivers and yet feels warm at the touch of the sun; and in the same way it may happen that the soul has both good and evil thoughts at the same time. For, ever since our intellect fell into a state of duality with regard to its knowledge (εἰς τὸ διπλοῦν τῆς γνώσεως), it has been forced to produce at one and the same time both good and evil thoughts, even against its own will; and this applies especially in the case of those who have reached a high degree of discrimination (διάκρισις). When the intellect tries to think continually of what is good, it suddenly recollects what is bad, since from the time of Adam's disobedience the human memory has been split into two modes of thinking⁷².

Diadochus makes in this connection an important distinction between 'nature' (φύσις) and 'habit' (ἔξις). It is *natural* for the heart to produce only good thoughts, for the heart as created by God is good. Evil thoughts are unnatural, even though since the fall bad thinking has become *habitual* to us:

It is true that the heart produces good and bad thoughts from itself (cf. Luke 6: 45). This happens, not because the heart by nature produces evil thoughts, but because as a result of the original deception the remembrance of evil has become as it were a habit⁷³.

How, then, can we return from the state of fallen 'habit' to the 'natural' condition which was ours before the fall? The beginning of our return, made

possible by virtue of Christ's incarnation, is effected through the sacrament of Baptism. Holy Baptism, according to Diadochus, cleanses us fully and completely from all the guilt and stain (ῥύπος) of sin, but it does not heal the duality in our will (τὸ διπλοῦν τῆς θελήσεως)⁷⁴. Here Diadochus agrees substantially with St Augustine, who holds that Baptism confers a full forgiveness of sins, but does not by itself restore to man the *donum integritatis* enjoyed by Adam before the fall: 'The guilt of concupiscence is absolved in Baptism, but the weakness remains' (*concupiscentiae reatus in baptisate solvitur, sed infirmitas manet*)⁷⁵. Mark the Monk, who in other ways agrees closely with Diadochus, adopts here a different standpoint: in his view Baptism by itself restores man to the *status ante peccatum*, to the situation of Adam in Paradise⁷⁶.

Through Baptism, so Diadochus teaches, the devil is expelled from the depths of the soul and grace is hidden secretly within it. Without this grace we could achieve nothing. Diadochus is no Pelagian: as Fr des Places observes, 'Grace forms the foundation of his theology'⁷⁷. We become fully conscious, however, of this secret, indwelling grace of Baptism, only if we co-operate with it actively through the right use of our free will⁷⁸. Thus, whereas the 'image' is renewed immediately at Baptism, the recovery of the 'likeness' can be achieved only gradually⁷⁹.

If inner duality persists after Baptism, how then is it to be overcome? Since the duality exists on the interconnected levels of both will and memory, healing is needed on both these levels at once. The two means of healing are 'the observance of the commandments' and the 'invocation of the Lord Jesus':⁸⁰ they are correlative, and the second presupposes the first. Duality on the level of the *will* is healed primarily through the observance of the commandments, through ascetic effort, through what Evagrius terms the 'active' life (πρᾶξις, πρακτική), although Diadochus does not himself use this term. The division in our *memory* is healed by 'always consuming our remembrance of evil with good thoughts'⁸¹. The 'remembrance of evil' is in this way displaced by the

74. Chapters 78.

75. *Retract.* I, xv, 2 (PL 32, 609). Cf. *De nupt.* I, xxv, 28 (PL 44, 430); *Contra Jul.* VI, xvi, 49 (PL 44, 850-1): *qui baptizatur omni peccato caret, non omni malo*.

76. *On Baptism* (PG 65, 1013C, 1017A-1020A, 1025AB). Cf. K. Ware, 'The Sacrament of Baptism and the Ascetic Life in the Teaching of Mark the Monk', *Studia Patristica*, vol. x (*Texte und Untersuchungen* 107: Berlin 1970), pp. 441-52.

77. 'Introduction', *Sources chrétiennes* 5 (3rd ed.), p. 30.

78. Chapters 77, 85.

79. Chapters 78, 89. While attaching importance to Baptism, Diadochus nowhere speaks about the Eucharist. The same emphasis on Baptism and virtual neglect of the Eucharist is a feature of Mark the Monk.

80. Mentioned together in Chapters 85; cf. 88, 96.

81. Chapters 5.

71. There are passages where Diadochus speaks of the body as the 'house' (Chapters 88) or even the 'veil' (καταπέτασμα: Chapters 71) of the soul. Taken in isolation, these might perhaps be understood in a Platonizing, Origenistic fashion, but read in context they do not have such connotations.

72. Chapters 88.

73. Chapters 83. For the 'remembrance of evil' as a habit, not something natural, see also *Sermon* 6.

'remembrance of good' or 'remembrance of God' (μνήμη ἀγαθοῦ, μνήμη Θεοῦ):

It is the mark of one who truly loves holiness that he continually burns up what is earthly in his heart through practising the remembrance of God, so that little by little evil is consumed in the fire of the remembrance of good, and his soul returns to its natural brilliance with yet greater glory⁸².

By the 'remembrance of good' or 'of God', Diadochus means more particularly the remembrance of Jesus. Thus, having spoken in a passage already cited⁸³ about the 'two modes of thinking' present in the memory as a result of the fall, he concludes:

But when we begin with fervent zeal to carry out the commandments of God, all our organs of perception will be illumined by a profound awareness of the light of grace; grace will consume our thoughts with its flames, sweetening our hearts in the peace of uninterrupted love, and enabling us to think thoughts that are spiritual and no longer carnal. These effects of grace are always present in those who are approaching perfection and have the remembrance of the Lord Jesus unceasingly in their hearts.

The unceasing 'remembrance of the Lord Jesus' eliminates all 'carnal thoughts' and reduces the 'two modes of thinking' to one, so restoring our memory to unity.

Such, then, is the primary function of the Jesus Prayer in the teaching of Diadochus. It is first of all a way of releasing the intellect from its present fragmentation among a multiplicity of thoughts and images. Through the invocation of the name of Jesus we attain image-free, non-discursive prayer of an Evagrian type. Thus the invocation or remembrance of the name, although directed to the person of Jesus, is not a form of imaginative meditation upon the Passion or other moments in the life of our Lord. Such discursive, imaginative meditation is indeed sometimes recommended by the Greek Fathers, notably by Mark the Monk⁸⁴. But what Diadochus means by the remembrance of Jesus is something different. So far from exploiting the image-making faculty or the discursive reason, the Jesus Prayer aims to bring these mental powers to stillness. It helps us to advance from diversity to simplicity and inner poverty, from distraction to single-pointed concentration.

The second function of the Jesus Prayer is closely related to the first. It heals the duality from which

our memory suffers as a result of the fall. The evil thoughts that arise continually within us are, through the invocation of the name, continually displaced by good thoughts; the 'remembrance of evil' is expelled by the 'remembrance of good' or, more precisely, by the remembrance of the One who is good, the Lord Jesus. So, through the progressive healing of the memory, and with it of the will, the fallen disunity of the human person is overcome, the soul is integrated within itself, and the body is reintegrated with the soul.

Pray without Ceasing

In order to fulfil this double task—to eliminate the multiplicity of thoughts and images that fragment the intellect, and to unify the divided memory—the remembrance or invocation of Jesus should be so far as possible *continuous*. This is a point to which Diadochus attaches great importance. 'Let the intellect *continually* concentrate on this phrase', he says; we are to 'meditate *unceasingly* upon this holy and glorious name';⁸⁵ 'if, then, a man...*unceasingly* calls upon the Lord Jesus...';⁸⁶ those approaching perfection 'have the remembrance of the Lord Jesus *unceasingly* in their hearts'⁸⁷. Most clearly of all, he writes:

He who wishes to cleanse his heart should keep it continually aflame through the remembrance of the Lord Jesus, making this his only study (μελέτη) and his ceaseless task. Those who desire to free themselves from their corruption should not sometimes pray and sometimes not pray, but they should give themselves always to prayer, keeping watch over their intellect even when outside the places of prayer. When someone is trying to purify gold, and allows the fire of the furnace to die down even for a moment, the material which he is purifying will harden again. So, too, someone who merely practises the remembrance of God from time to time, loses through lack of continuity what he hopes to gain through his prayer. It is the mark of one who truly loves holiness that he continually burns up what is earthly in his heart⁸⁸.

The same insistence upon the need for continuity in the remembrance or invocation of Jesus is to be found already in Nilus:

So we should not become sluggish or depressed, or grow weary, but should not cease from invoking the precious name of Jesus⁸⁹.

82. *Chapters* 97.

83. *Chapters* 88 (cf. note 72).

84. See especially *To Nicolas* 8-9 (PG 65, 1041C-1045A).

85. *Chapters* 59.

86. *Chapters* 85.

87. *Chapters* 88.

88. *Chapters* 97.

89. *Letters* III, 273 (PG 79, 520C).

Skilfully arm yourself, night and day, with the remembrance of the Saviour and the fervent invocation of the venerable name⁹⁰.

As a result of the continuous, uninterrupted manner in which it is practised, the remembrance or invocation of Jesus grows ever more inward, ever more spontaneous, more an integral part of us—not just an activity but a state; something that we *are* as well as something that we *do*.

Diadochus expresses this point by underlining the particular significance of the *heart* in connection with the remembrance of God or of the Lord Jesus. By 'heart' he evidently means, not merely the emotions and affections, but, as in the Macarian *Homilies*, the deep centre of the human person as a whole⁹¹. We are, he says, to 'dwell always in our own heart';⁹² we are to recover 'the remembrance of the heart' which has been dissipated by the bodily senses⁹³. He speaks especially about the 'depths' of the heart (βάθος/βάθη τῆς καρδίας): it is here that grace makes its dwelling⁹⁴, and that the fullness of love is realized⁹⁵. It is likewise in the depths of the heart that we are to establish the remembrance of God or of Jesus: we are to be 'always looking into the depths of our heart with unceasing remembrance of God';⁹⁶ those who say the Jesus Prayer 'meditate unceasingly upon this holy and glorious name in the depths of their heart'⁹⁷. In these passages Diadochus seems to mean by the 'depths of the heart' the deep self, the ground of the soul, the point of unity and integration where we become one with that which we say or think: 'You are the music while the music lasts' (T.S. Eliot). In the *Gnostic Chapters* there can here be found, in seminal form, the ideas developed much later by the fourteenth-century Byzantine Hesychasts: through the use of the Jesus Prayer the intellect is enabled to descend into the heart, so that *nous* and *kardia* are united, and the prayer becomes prayer of the whole person, including the body.

As the invocation becomes more inward, so it grows ever more instinctive. The soul is to call automatically on Jesus, just as a child cries out spontaneously to his father even when asleep⁹⁸. Indeed, to Diadochus this is more than a mere analogy, for he considers that the intellect should continue to practise

'the remembrance of the glorious and holy name of the Lord Jesus' even when 'we fall into a light sleep'⁹⁹. In this way the prayer reaches out beyond the frontiers of the fully conscious into the borderland between waking and dreaming. As the Song of Songs puts it, 'I sleep, but my heart wakes' (5:2). St Isaac of Nineveh (seventh century) develops this idea in his own characteristic way:

When the Spirit takes up its dwelling in a man, he does not cease to pray, because the Spirit will constantly pray in him. Then, neither when he sleeps nor when he is awake, will prayer be cut off from his soul; but when he eats and when he drinks, when he lies down or when he does any work, even when he is immersed in sleep, the perfumes of prayer will breathe in his soul spontaneously. And henceforth he will not possess prayer at limited times, but always; and when he has outward rest, even then prayer is ministered to him secretly. The silence of the serene is prayer!¹⁰⁰.

Weapon against Demons, Giver of Warmth and Light

As well as stripping the intellect of images and unifying the memory, the remembrance of Jesus has three further effects:

First, it serves as a weapon against demonic assaults. We are to 'use the holy name to repel the evil' with which the devil tempts us!¹⁰¹. When 'Satan importunes the soul with a sense of deceptive sweetness', the remembrance of the name of Jesus will reveal to us the true character of his suggestions:

If the intellect at that time cleaves with fervent remembrance to the holy name of the Lord Jesus, and uses that holy and glorious name as a weapon against Satan's deception, he gives up this trick and for the future will attack the soul directly and personally. As a result the intellect clearly discerns the deception of the evil one and advances even further in the experience of discrimination!¹⁰².

The remembrance of the name confers *diakrisis*, 'discrimination' or 'discernment', enabling us to recognize the deceptions of the devil for what they truly are. Nilus¹⁰³ and John Climacus¹⁰⁴ also set the Jesus Prayer in the same context, treating it especially as a means of combatting the demonic powers.

90. *Letters* III, 278 (PG 79, 521B). See also the very emphatic passage in I, 239 (167D) on the continuous remembrance of God (but without specific reference to the name of Jesus).

91. On the meaning of the 'heart' in early Christian authors, see A. Guillaumont, 'Les sens des noms du coeur dans l'antiquité' in *Le coeur (Etudes carmélitaines, vol. xxix: Bruges 1950)*, pp. 41-81; 'Le "coeur" chez les spirituels grecs à l'époque ancienne', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 2 (1952), cols. 2281-8.

92. *Chapters* 57.

93. *Chapters* 56.

94. *Chapters* 81.

95. *Chapters* 92.

96. *Chapters* 56.

97. *Chapters* 59.

98. *Chapters* 61 (cited above, note 48).

99. *Chapters* 31.

100. *Mystic Treatises*, translated by A.J. Wensinck (Amsterdam 1923), p. 174.

101. *Chapters* 33.

102. *Chapters* 31.

103. *Letters* II, 140 (PG 79, 260A, D); II, 214 (312C); III, 273 (520C); III, 278 (521BC).

104. *Ladder* 15 (PG 88, 889CD); 21 (945C).

Secondly, when maintained by the intellect in the depths of the heart, the remembrance of the name is accompanied by 'warmth of heart' (θερμὴ τῆς καρδίας)¹⁰⁵. Diadochus distinguishes two types of inner warmth: first, a warmth produced by the soul from within itself; second, a warmth conferred on the heart by the Holy Spirit. Evidently he regards the first type of warmth as natural and 'psychic', the second and higher type as a spiritual gift of grace¹⁰⁶. In neither case, so it seems, is the warmth simply a sensation of physical heat, since it originates not from the body but from the soul or the Holy Spirit; on the other hand, in both cases it appears to be more than a purely metaphorical warmth of fervour or ardent zeal. Later writers on the Jesus Prayer, such as St Gregory of Sinai (died 1346) or the Russian Bishop Theophan the Recluse (1815–94), offer detailed criteria for discriminating between different kinds of warmth. In Diadochus the theme is not developed, but he has at any rate made explicit an aspect of the Jesus Prayer that recurs repeatedly in the later tradition. Neither merely physical nor yet purely symbolic, this warmth should be understood in the light of his teaching on the spiritual senses. It exemplifies the 'affective' quality that characterizes his spirituality as a whole.

Thirdly, the invocation of the name leads to a vision of light: 'Those who meditate unceasingly upon this holy and glorious name in the depths of their heart can sometimes see the light of their own intellect'¹⁰⁷. In another passage Diadochus speaks somewhat more explicitly about this light of the intellect, although without on this occasion linking it with the invocation of the name. This intellectual light, like the 'warmth of heart', seems to be neither merely physical nor yet purely symbolic:

You should not doubt that the intellect, when it begins to be strongly under the influence of the energy of divine light, becomes so completely translucent that it sees its own light in full abundance. It is said that this takes place when the power of the soul gains control over the passions¹⁰⁸.

It is significant that Diadochus makes a firm distinction here between the divine light and the light of the intellect: the first makes the second manifest within us, but the second is in itself no more than a created and natural light. There is thus an important difference between the vision of the light of the intellect, as understood by Evagrius and Diadochus, and the vision of the uncreated light of the Transfiguration, as interpreted by St Gregory Palamas and the

Constantinopolitan Councils of 1341, 1347 and 1351. Although he speaks of the soul being 'under the influence of the energy of divine light', Diadochus does not speak directly and openly about the possibility of a vision of uncreated light in this present life.

In general, he is reserved about visions of light:

Let no one who hears us speak of the perceptive faculty of the intellect imagine that by this we mean that the glory of God appears to man visibly. We do indeed affirm that the soul, when pure, perceives God's grace, tasting it in some ineffable manner; but no invisible reality appears to it in a visible form, since now 'we walk by faith, not by sight', as St. Paul says (2 Cor. 5:7). If, then, light or some fiery shape should be seen by one pursuing the spiritual way, he should on no account accept such a vision: it is an obvious deceit of the enemy¹⁰⁹.

So, after referring to the light of the intellect, Diadochus adds at once:

But when St Paul says that 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14), he definitely teaches us that everything which appears to the intellect, whether as light or as fire, if it has a shape, is the product of the evil artifice of the enemy¹¹⁰.

The point here is that we should not accept any vision of light or fire if it has a form (εἶδος) or shape (σχῆμα). We are presumably to understand, even though Diadochus does not explicitly say this, that the light of the intellect has no such form or shape, but is an experience of simple, unarticulated luminosity. Much more so will this be the case with any vision of the divine light; for the divine beauty is altogether 'without form' (ἀνείδεος) or 'beyond form' (ὑπὲρ εἶδος)¹¹¹. Even in the age to come, the only way in which the righteous will see the 'formless Father' is 'in the form and glory of the Son', that is to say, in and through the form of the Son's glorified humanity¹¹². There are close parallels here between Diadochus and Irenaeus.

While accepting in this manner that the Jesus Prayer leads to a 'vision without form' of the light of the intellect, Diadochus does not consider this vision to be of fundamental importance. Experiences of light, even when sent by God, are no more than a preliminary stage, which the spiritual pilgrim is called to advance beyond. So he writes:

At the start of the spiritual way the soul

105. Chapters 59.

106. Chapters 74.

107. Chapters 59. On the Evagrian and Macarian background to this, cf. notes 17–18.

108. Chapters 40.

109. Chapters 36.

110. Chapters 40.

111. Vision 15–16.

112. Vision 21.

usually has the conscious experience of being illumined with its own light through the action of grace. But, as we advance further, grace works its mysteries within the contemplative soul in a manner of which it is not aware¹¹³.

For Diadochus the final goal of the inner journey is not to behold visions of light but to be assumed into divine love:

When the radiance of love is conferred, it is evident that the image has been fully transformed into the beauty of the likeness. So our inner man is renewed day by day through tasting love, and in the perfection of love it finds its own fulfilment¹¹⁴.

'He reveals with the utmost precision the deepest mysteries of the virtue of prayer', states St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1749–1809) in his preface to the *Hundred Gnostic Chapters*; the work forms 'as it were an archetype of the Church's teaching upon holy watchfulness'¹¹⁵. Exact yet fervent, subtle yet filled with affection, the *Chapters* are remarkable for their sobriety and balance. It is not surprising that they have proved deeply influential, and that, in the later tradition from the *Life of Abba Philemon*

(?sixth–seventh century) onwards, St Diadochus of Photice has been regularly cited as a foremost authority on the Jesus Prayer.

The doctrine of the human person that underlies Diadochus' use of the Jesus Prayer is a doctrine of *unity*. The remembrance of the name is the way by which, as living persons, we recover the inner wholeness that was ours at the beginning. For Diadochus, then, far more is involved than a mere technique or method of concentration. The invocation of the Lord Jesus is essentially connected – and this is perhaps Diadochus' most decisive contribution to the development of the Jesus Prayer – with a particular understanding of man's nature, with a Biblical anthropology that sees our personhood as an organic whole comprising body as well as soul. Prior to the fall, so he believes, our human nature was unified, and through the repeated invocation *Lord Jesus* it can be reintegrated once again. Through the Jesus Prayer we are enabled to attain inner silence of heart – imageless prayer, such as Evagrius commends – and at the same time to overcome the duality in our memory that is the result of Adam's sin. The Jesus Prayer is our way of return to genuine selfhood, the means whereby the body comes to share with the soul in a single spiritual joy, so that our whole person finds fulfilment in undivided love.

113. *Chapters* 69.

114. *Chapters* 89.

115. Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπτικῶν, vol. i (3rd ed., Athens 1957), p. 234.